

ii₄ MEMORY, HABIT, AND IMITATION

for the daily tasks of dressing and undressing.

By practising these operations we "short circuit" the chain of reactions that they represent. detach it from the brain and permit it to pass subconsciously along local (ideo-motor) nerve systems.

The force of Habit produces similar results. but in a different fashion. It is concerned with impulses as well as with processes. and its most noticeable effect is to facilitate our response to the promptings of particular instincts. memories. and beliefs. We may imagine its action as wearing by repetition the channel by which an impulse frees itself. and so increasing the volume of the impulsive current.

Thus by a life of enforced solitude. such as that of a hunter or explorer. the individualistic impulses may become so predominant as to render a man unwilling to mix with his fellows and uneasy in their society. Under different circumstances the same man may become so dominated by social impulses as to consider a day wasted if some hours of it are not spent at his club. Feelings of respect grow under the influence of respectful manners.

By the systematic practice of asceticism—even in the pettiest of matters—the self-repressive impulses may be stiffened until they form a moral backbone that will enable one to confront with courage tribulations before which those whose wills are undisciplined fall prostrate in nervous self-abandonment. In a life of industry

the industrial impulse may become as imperative as life itself. so that death follows upon the heels of release from toil. We may educate ourselves in kindness by practising it. Our cruel feelings may be stimulated by spectacles which use bloodshed or inhumanity as instruments of excitement. Should it pander to lust, the theatre strengthens the tyranny of man's lustful passions.